

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A method and apparatus for automatic threading and winding of optical fiber onto various components in a fiber draw system, as well as methods and apparatus for conducting online tensile screening of optical fiber at high speeds. In a preferred embodiment, the fiber is tensile tested during fiber draw and wound directly onto a shipping spool to be shipped to a customer. The tensile stress can be imparted to the fiber during the draw process by feeding the fiber through a screener capstan, which works in conjunction with another capstan to impart the desired tensile stress to the fiber during the draw process. Another aspect is a method and apparatus for threading or rethreading of a moving length of fiber through a fiber draw or fiber testing process, in which fiber is wound onto a spool, comprising activating an aspirator to obtain the fiber at a first location and moving said aspirator in at least two dimensions to thereby move the fiber to a second location and thread the fiber through or onto at least one component in the fiber draw or testing process.

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